(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reason therefor; and

(d) the reasons suggested by the Central Pollution Control Board to arrest rising water-pollution in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) The Central Pollution Control Board has not made any proposal to amend the existing pollution control laws to stop the practice of idol immersion in the rivers and ponds. The Central Pollution Control Board has made the following suggestions to the State Pollution Control Boards for preventing water pollution during immersion of idols.

1. The offering like flowers and leaves may be collected in separate containers or in pits for compositing;
2. After immersion, the recyclable articles like jari, clothes, plastics, aluminium foil, wood and bamboo may be taken out of the water bodies. The civic authorities may engage agencies/ persons for doing the job;
3. Areas may be earmarked for immersion and such other activities to prevent indiscriminate disposal and to help retrieval of recoverable materials; and
4. Environment-friendly practices such as use of biodegradable dyes and paints may be encouraged.

Exclusion of tea gardens from forest cover in Assam

378. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which tea gardens are excluded from forest cover in Assam;

(b) the reasons for eviction of peasants from forest land in this State; and

(c) whether there is enough forest cover in the State for ecological purpose?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) The tea gardens have been excluded from forest cover in Assam and other parts of the country in forest cover assessment by Forest Survey of India, Dehradun because tea cultivation is not a forest land use.

(b) In compliance of the Supreme Court's order, the Ministry of Environment and Forests have issued directions in the month of May & October, 2002 respectively to the various State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to deal with the issue of the encroachments seriously and evict the ineligible encroachers from the forest lands in a time bound manner as per the guidelines of Forest (Conservation) Act, 11980. Also, the Ministry has advised the various State Govemments/UT Administrations that the eviction process should be monitored at the highest level and accountability should be fixed for in action.

(c) National Forest Policy, 1988 envisages a minimum of one third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. In the hills and mountainous regions, the aim should be to maintain two third of the area under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system. As per the la+est assessment of Forest Survey of India, the State of Assam has 30.2 % of the total geographical area under forest cover.

Anarchy in Ranthambore wild life sanctuary

. 379. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether great anarchy prevails in the world famous Ranthambore wild life sanctuary due to which death of the animals, reduction in the number of tourists and abnormal situation thereof continue;

(b) whether there is a much more irregularity in the assistance received from the World Bank for the protection of environment and development of the sanctuary; and